

4-20-1992

Resolution for a Masters of Fine Arts in Dance

The College at Brockport, College Senate

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Resolution #10 1991-92

TO: President John E. Van de Wetering
FROM: The Faculty Senate Meeting on 4-20-92
(Date)
RE: X I. Formal Resolution (Act of Determination)
II. Recommendation (Urging the fitness of)
III. Other (Notice, Request, Report, etc.)
For your information

SUBJECT: Resolution for a Masters of Fine Arts in Dance



Signed Edward J. Van Deyne
(For the Senate)

Date Sent 4-29-92

TO: The Faculty Senate
FROM: President John E. Van de Wetering
RE: I. Decision and Action Taken on Formal Resolution
a. Accepted. Effective Date from approval
b. Deferred for discussion with the Faculty Senate
on _____
c. Unacceptable for the reasons contained in the
attached explanation
II, III.
a. Received and acknowledged
b. Comment:

DISTRIBUTION: All Attached
(Cover only sent - full
Resolution from Fac Senate)

Distribution Date 3/11/92 Signed: [Signature]
(President of the College)

PROPOSAL
MASTERS OF FINE ARTS
IN DANCE

State University of New York
College at Brockport

Dr. John Van de Wetering, President

College of Arts and Performance
Dr. Ginny Studer, Dean

Department of Dance
Jacqueline Davis, Chair
Sondra Fraleigh, Graduate Program Director

Introduction and Rationale

The Department of Dance at Brockport is well prepared to offer a Master of Fine Arts Degree in Dance. It is in a unique position in this regard, having developed the only graduate dance program in the State University of New York with its Master of Arts Degree. The latter serves well as a basis upon which to build further study at the graduate level in offering the MFA.

The proposed MFA can be offered within existing resources. The highly qualified faculty, extensive studio facilities, fine dance library and well equipped dance theater all serve to encourage institution of MFA study at Brockport. Brockport has the most broadly conceived and culturally diverse dance curriculum in New York State as demonstrated in the New York State Dance Association Directory.

The Proposed MFA has unique features which capitalize on the strengths of the faculty and meet well the criteria for MFA proposals established by the National Association of Schools of Dance. The existing graduate dance curriculum is extensive, as demonstrated in the graduate catalogue of courses, and requires only minor additions in implementing the proposed Master of Fine Arts Degree, primarily the culminating semester which is individually designed through an Apprenticeship or Creative Project. The MFA degree would make fuller use of existing courses, especially the technique and choreography courses which can easily accommodate more students.

The institution of the MFA in dance at Brockport will give the State University of New York a terminal degree program in dance to serve the needs of New York State students as well as those who have been attracted to Brockport's dance department from out of state and abroad. Prospective students will have a choice in selecting Brockport for MFA study, one that will prepare them for careers in performance and choreography or teaching. Students will be able to draw upon the highly varied talents of the faculty and the cultural diversity we value. They will become part of a department that provides leadership for dance -regionally, nationally, and internationally.

Brockport's MA in Dance as a Foundation

The proposed MFA will be built upon the MA program already established in graduate studies in dance. The current MA is a 36 hour degree program. The proposed MFA will be a 60 hour degree program utilizing the core courses of the MA (dance research, dance modernism, fieldwork/teaching, graduate dance technique) and adding studio requirements in technique, choreography, and performance as recommended in the guidelines of the National Association of Schools of Dance. Courses in production, design, music literature, dance history, and related arts will also be

required. All of these courses are already offered on a regular basis as electives for MA students at Brockport.

Uniqueness of the Proposed MFA

Brockport's dance department, with a major in dance since 1970, has a history of offering a high quality dance education with options for students within the program. We have been SUNY's liberal arts dance major program, not a professionally based dance training institution. Within our mandate, we instituted Master of Arts study in 1982. Now we are ready to expand our offerings to include more intensive study of dance at the graduate level, emphasizing innovative concepts in technical training relative to performance and choreography within our mission of providing a high quality dance program with curricular and cultural diversity.

The MFA in dance is now a terminal degree. In order to be competitive and to attract good students to our program, we need to be able to offer this degree option for those who want it and who qualify. MFA degrees are preferred degrees for those seeking employment in higher education, and for those who seek positions as choreographers and performers either professionally or in education.

We recognize that dance ability -that is technical proficiency and choreographic skill - is the root of any dancer's credentials, whether they intend to have a career as a professional dancer or as a teacher. Teaching dance implies technical and choreographic ability. Our goal is to prepare dancers who will have the technical, performance and choreographic skills to be good teachers, and to continue to provide technical and performance/choreographic opportunities for those few who aspire to become professional performers or choreographers, as many of our past students have done. Modern dance technique incorporating recent movement theories (kinesiological and somatic bases for dance), a thorough study of ballet techniques, and acquaintance with at least one ethnic-traditional form of dance will provide the technical foundation for Brockport's MFA degree. This conception of technical preparation for the dancer is educationally sound, promoting a contemporary concern for health, injury prevention, and peak performance along with the aesthetic goals of dance. Our goals for training the dancer will be achieved through the inclusion of sound technical training and movement theories in support of enhanced performance. The latter include (Laban movement analysis), and dance somatics (The Feldenkrais Method and The Alexander Technique). In aesthetic terms our conception of technical training is not pressured toward a singular dance form, but is inclusive of modern dance, ballet, and ethnic traditions. It accounts for the educational and cultural diversity we value.

In meeting our goal of providing advanced study in choreography and performance, we will continue to employ the considerable choreographic talent and performance experience of our present faculty, five of whom are regionally, nationally, and internationally recognized as performers and choreographers, as demonstrated in the faculty vita. Three courses are required in this area: intermediate or advanced composition, dance performance techniques, and dance repertory and literature. Other classes may be included as electives.

The final feature of the MFA is a Performance/Choreography Apprenticeship or Creative Project and Professional Paper. This provides a full semester's culminating project, involving the student intensively with their own creative endeavor. In both cases the focus is on development of performance skills and choreographic experience accompanied by written expression. If students choose a Performance/Choreography Apprenticeship, they will apprentice with a dance company and present a lecture-demonstration and written report based on their apprenticeship. If students choose the Creative Project and Professional Paper, they will present a concert work of their own choreography and performance accompanied by a professional paper based upon the guiding theme of their concert work. These are unique features of our program design, and will serve our prospective students in meeting career goals in professional dance or in dance education.

Brockport's Unique Position to Develop the MFA in Dance

Brockport's Dance Department is uniquely equipped to offer an MFA in dance. It is the principal liberal arts dance major program in SUNY, and serves SUNY's largest liberal arts undergraduate and graduate dance constituency. Besides its BA/BS and MA degrees, it serves dance minors and Interdisciplinary Arts for Children dance emphasis students.

There are no programs similar to Brockport's proposed program in New York State. There are no graduate programs in Western New York State of any kind. The graduate MFA program at New York University is not supported by a broad liberal arts curricular base, and is located at the opposite end of the State in New York City. We do not anticipate an MFA program at Brockport would have a great impact on this program since we draw our students primarily from Western New York (with several from countries abroad). We would undoubtedly draw students from SUNY's undergraduate dance major and dance emphasis programs (Potsdam, Buffalo, Geneseo) and SUNY's BFA in dance (Purchase) as the MA program has done.

Increased Enrollment for Dance Through More Options at the Graduate Level

A fuller development of graduate study through an MFA degree would encourage enrollment at a time when study in all the arts is decreasing in favor of more practical pursuits. The most obvious reason to support increased enrollment is that our graduate classes can support more students. Class size in the graduate only courses is now small with an average of 12 MA students (6 at each level) at any one time.

MFA Accomplished Within Existing Resources

There are more faculty resources for graduate study at Brockport now than when it was instituted, since our overall undergraduate enrollment has dropped significantly, allowing the diversion of faculty efforts into graduate work. While undergraduate dance majors have decreased, graduate study has remained steady with the admittance of an average of 6 new students each year.

The proposal for instituting graduate dance study at Brockport included a five year plan to accommodate a total of 60 graduate students and 110 undergraduate students (Proposal, Master of Arts in Dance, p. 33). Since the institution of graduate study in 1982, we have yet to reach that goal. We have experienced a small reduction of faculty resources since then; therefore, a more reasonable goal for us now would be a graduate program of about 30 (15 at each level) and an undergraduate program of about 80 (20 at each level).

We are actively recruiting undergraduate students to meet this goal. At present we have about 15 undergraduates at each level, a total population of around 60, including arts for children dance emphasis students and second majors. When the MA in dance was instituted, we had over a hundred undergraduate dance majors.

Faculty advisement of graduate student projects would be our major consideration in admitting more students, since a unique feature of the program would be a 12 credit apprenticeship with a professional dance company, or a creative project and professional paper. We are confident, however, that the number we intend to admit (a total graduate admission of no more than 15 new students each year, MA and MFA combined) would be within our advisement capacity - particularly since our undergraduate advisement load has decreased over the last ten years. This quota would little more than double our present graduate student population which is too small for fully registered graduate courses.

As a special consideration for offering the MFA, we would need to retain our present ability to teach dance technique at all levels, particularly intermediate and advanced. This could be achieved by retaining adjunct faculty in this area, inviting

guest teachers, or restoring the technique line (tenure track) recently lost to the department through resignation of faculty. The latter solution is preferable.

The proposed MFA Degree can be implemented within existing resources, faculty, facilities, budget, and curriculum - with the addition of three new courses, two of which are through contract, designed as an Apprenticeship or a Creative Project in the student's final semester. These would be undertaken in the manner of an independent study, and do not overburden our existing curricular offerings. The Dance Somatics course is already being proposed for the existing MA to augment instruction in technique. This would not constitute a new addition for the MFA only.

The Facilities are being significantly improved through the renovation of Hartwell, and will be among the finest in the country. The operating budget and budget for production has already significantly improved in recent years, and will not need to be increased. Our dance library is excellent for graduate study. We hope to update our periodical subscriptions to keep up with new publications. Graduate students have access to all of the publications of the Congress on Research in Dance, including hard to find back issues through CORD's archives at Brockport.

Degree Requirements

MASTER OF FINE ARTS IN DANCE

Five Semester Program, 60 Credit Hours

Core Courses (with MA students)

DNS 602 Dance Research	3 Credits
DNS 603 Graduate Dance Technique I	3 Credits *
DNS 605 Graduate Dance Technique II	3 Credits *
DNS 606 Field Work in Dance	3 Credits
DNS 608 Dance Modernism	3 Credits

Total of 15 Credits

Dance Technique, Intermediate and Advanced

DNS 545-550 Dance Technique and Theory 3 technique classes from the above series (3 credits of this requirement may be met through a movement theory or dance somatics course)

Total of 9 Credits *

Choreography, Performance, History and Related Arts

DNS 530 Intermediate Composition or 641 Advanced Composition	3 Credits *
DNS 527 Dance Performance Techniques	3 Credits *
DNS 555 Music Literature for Dance	3 Credits
DNS 524 Dance Repertory and Literature	3 Credits *
DNS 516 Dance History	3 Credits
Elective in performance or choreography	3 Credits *
Open Electives	6 Credits

(One elective should focus on ethnic or traditional dance performance. If Movement Theories or Dance Somatics is not taken in the three course technique series, it should be included here as an elective.)

Total of 24 Credits

Performance/Choreography Apprenticeship, or Creative Project and Professional Paper

Total of 12 Credits *

PROGRAM TOTAL 60 CREDITS

(39 credits are in performance and choreography in keeping with the standards of the National Association of Schools of Dance, courses with * meet this requirement.)